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DANCE INTEGRATION

36 Dance Lesson Plans for Science and Mathematics

Karen A. Kaufmann
Jordan Dehline



Dance Integration: 36 Dance Lesson Plans for Science and Mathematics
By Karen A. Kaufmann and Jordan Dehline
Published June 2014 by Human Kinetics,
Champaign, IL
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Karen Kaufmann, a professor of dance at The University of Montana in Missoula and director of the CoMotion Dance Project, teamed up with Jordan Dehline, a dance teaching artist for CoMotion and an adjunct instructor at UM, to offer this collection of engaging dance activities to bring science and mathematics curriculums to life.

Dance Integration offers 36 K-5 lesson plans that infuse creativity in mathematics and science content. Written for K-5 teachers who are looking for new ways to teach the standards, *Dance Integration* guides students to create original choreography in mathematics and science and perform it for one another.

In doing so, teachers will help spark new ideas for their students out of those two curriculums. And in the freshness of these new ideas, students will increase their comfort in performing in front of one another and discussing performances, while deepening their understanding of the core content through their kinesthetic experiences.

The book includes:

- Instructions on developing modules integrating mathematics and science;
- Ready-to-use lesson plans, extensively field-tested by the authors, that classroom teachers, physical education teachers, dance educators, and dance specialists can use; and
- Tried-and-true methods for connecting to 21st-century learning standards and integrating dance into K-5 curriculums.

Part I introduces the role of dance in education; defines dance integration; and describes the uses, benefits, and effects of dance when used in tandem with another content area. Part II offers dance and mathematics lessons that parallel the common core standards for mathematics. Part III presents dance and science learning activities in physical science, life science, earth and space sciences, investigation, experimentation and technology.

Each lesson plan includes a warm-up, a developmental progression of activities, and formative and summative assessments and reflections. The progressions help students explore, experiment, create, and perform their understanding of the content.

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ARTS EDUCATION

Big Sky Arts Education

By Emily Kohring
Director of Arts Education
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Hope, engagement, well-being and the arts

I just read a study that intrigued me, published by Gallup Education this past April, titled "State of American's Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education" (products.gallup.com).

Often studies published by education think tanks like these focus on "raising student achievement" – usually referring to the effort to raise student scores on standardized tests. This research-based study focuses on success rather than achievement. In a poll of over 600,000 students, Gallup measured student success based on three factors:

- Hope
- Emotional engagement
- Well-being

Results indicated that only 33% of students scored highly in all three of these factors, defined as critical to educational success – meaning only one-third of students in America's schools are "success-ready."

With little to keep them engaged in school environments where funding cuts have eliminated extracurricular activities, and the curriculum has been narrowed to the subjects that are going to be tested, many of our students are losing hope that they can become college and career-ready adults.

The study acknowledges that there are factors outside of school that can contribute to a student's lack of engagement. However, they also found that a student is 30 times more likely to be engaged at school if they agree with the following two statements:

"My school is committed to building the strengths of each student."

"I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future."

Imagine if all schools focused on students' strengths instead of on their deficiencies? What if, instead of "drill and kill" in preparation for tests and cutting out all extras, school days were designed to allow students to spend more time each day doing what they do best?

For some students it will be writing code; for others, it will be spending time in a lab; and for many, it will be studying dance, music, theatre or visual art.

In my previous position teaching at a charter school for the visual and performing arts in St. Louis, I had a student who I will call Shawn. He was the type of student who caused trouble for nearly every teacher – he was disruptive, performed low academically, could barely sit in his seat, and loved to argue.

In a regular school with no arts curriculum it seemed unlikely that this 8th grader was going to make it through much more of his school career before he dropped out. However, Shawn discovered in my 8th-grade acting class that he had a strength: he was brilliant at improvisation. He could think on his feet,

was hilarious, and everybody wanted to be his partner on stage because he was also giving – he made them look good.

Once Shawn figured out his strength, he started coming to class early, taking his seat and asking me what we were going to do today. He became a leader, taking charge of the daily warm-up ritual.

The other students chose him to lead the warm-up in our year-end showcase for parents. Instead of "Shawn, that kid who is always causing trouble" he became "Shawn, that kid who is amazing at improv."

After many years as a teaching artist and a classroom teacher in nearly every kind of K-12 public school, I have witnessed that moment over and over again where the switch is flipped and a student like Shawn, who never succeeded at anything in school, suddenly finds he or she has talent that is being celebrated. I have always found the magic of arts learning is in the way it illuminates the special gifts children have that were previously hidden under a bushel because the student was low in reading, couldn't sit still, or was exceptionally shy.

That's great, but how to pay for it? Focusing on student strengths means adding back in lots of subjects that have been cut out of school curriculum in the high-stakes testing era. Consider this, also from the Gallup study:

"A 2012 study by the Brown Center on Education Policy found that standardized testing costs states a combined \$1.7 billion per year, although that figure is just a tiny fraction of overall K-12 spending. More important is the cost such tests represent in terms of lost instructional time and reduced capacity to individualize students' learning experiences."

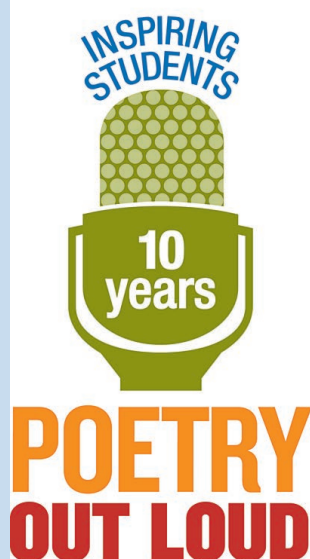
Let's imagine if all that money and time were re-allocated to programs that focused on building students talents and strengths, including restoring arts programs to schools.

Brandon Busteded, the executive director of Gallup Education, proposed a Bill of Rights for All Students in America's Schools. It ensures that students are able to agree on three statements about their school experience:

1. I have someone who cares about my development.
2. I do what I like to do each day.
3. I do what I'm best at every day.

I think few parents would disagree that we all want this for our children. I know I want this for my daughter when she starts kindergarten a year from now.

Call me a hopeless optimist, but I believe that standardized testing and narrow curriculum will soon be a thing of the past, and students and teachers who love the arts will be celebrated for their strengths instead of cut out of the picture.



Poetry Out Loud: Help students fall in love with poetry

All Montana high schools are invited to participate in the 10th anniversary of Poetry Out Loud, a national poetry recitation competition created by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, and sponsored by the Montana Arts Council. Poetry Out Loud (www.poetryoutloud.org) encourages high school students to memorize and perform great poems.

The program builds on the recent resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, seen in the popular forms of slam poetry and rap music, and invites them into the high school classroom. It also helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence and learn about their literary heritage.

Teachers participating in Poetry Out Loud receive classroom materials and resources. Poetry Out Loud has strong connections to the Montana Common Core Standards in English Language Arts.

The program features a pyramid structure that includes classroom, school and regional contests, culminating in the state com-

petition, held in Helena in March. The winner of the state finals competes at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals, April 27-29 in Washington, DC.

In addition to travel costs for the winner and one adult chaperone, the state champion also receives \$200 cash, plus \$500 for their school to purchase poetry books from the Poetry Foundation. The champion's English teacher will also receive \$1,000 toward their travel cost to attend the national competition.

The national champion receives a \$20,000 college scholarship, as well as \$500 for their school to purchase poetry books.

Last year, 79 schools across Montana participated in Poetry Out Loud, and the state champion was Sowmya Sudhaker from Butte High. Could the next champion be sitting in your English class?

To get your students enrolled in Poetry Out Loud, contact our state coordinator, Margaret Belisle, marbelisle@aol.com or 406-439-6443.